

LETTER^A

To a FRIEND,

In Answer to

A Letter to a Dissenter,

Upon occasion of His Majesties late Gracious Declaration of Indulgence.

SIR,

I Am not a little surpriz'd to find you so Urgent upon me, to give you my Sense of a late Pamphlet, Entituled, *A Letter to a Dissenter*, &c. You know there is no Man more Averse from the humour of Scribbling than my self; and you know too, That some Returns have been made to that Paper already, and more are like to follow. I can't be of the honest Man's mind, that told me, Peoples talk of *Five Senses*, was but an idle Story; there was but One, and that was *Feeling*: But really Sir, If Men will not trust the Sense of *Feeling*, I know not which they will abide by, and if we foregoe the Evidence of *All Sense*, we may, for ought I see, give up one good Argument against Transubstantiation: And yet, I must freely tell you, I should have been tempted to think the Dissenters such stupid Creatures, as wanted even the *Sense of Feeling*, if they had not by all possible means express'd their Thankfulness to His Majesty, for His *Gracious Declaration of Indulgence*, which at once reliev'd them from Burthens, as Innumerable, as Insupportable.

If I had not found by the Close of yours, That you lay some weight upon the Insinuations of *Indirect Means*, us'd to procure the late *Addresses*; I should have thought it Answer enough to your general Demand, to have told you, I have no Opinion of the Discourse, you say is so much Admir'd by others; for I am not able to resolve you whether it was design'd for a Libel upon the *Government*, or upon *Dissenters*; the Reproach of both being carried on with so even a Thread thro' the whole.

But this I must tell you, I know the World too well, to be Trick'd out of my Senses by the Charms of handsome Metaphors, and labour'd Sentences. I will puzzle the best Oratour (without the assistance of Penal Laws) to make a Man believe the *Crow is White*: And yet, I take not that Task to be so difficult, as to persuade the Dissenters, *That all the former Haughtiness of the Church of England towards them, is for ever extinguish'd*; when they are told in the next Paragraph, That this Potent Governess, can *darken the Heavens* when she pleases, *Turn the Royal Thunder upon their Heads*, and *blow them off the Stage with a Breath*; and all this with no more trouble than a *Smile*, or a *kind Word* bestowed on some-body. 'Tis pity her untimely Kindness for Dissenters, will not allow her so much as a good look towards her Sovereign, nor her boasted Loyalty encline her to one *Glimpse of Compliance*, with the Prince's Design to make all his Subjects *Ease*!

But the Dissenters will readily tell her, for all her Threats; they can safely trust the *Royal Word*, and despise her Attempts, to obtain the Violation of it. I have observ'd some to read that Passage with a scornful Smile, and say, *That Danger's past already*, for there has been no Stone left unturned, to bring about what they now Threaten: But all Attempts have proved Vain; and they can no more persuade His Majesty to Violate His *Sacred Promise*, than they can us, that themselves will become good Natur'd; if they have Power left them to do Mischief.

You see, when ones Hand is in, 'tis hard to forbear more Animadversions upon a *Criminal Paper*, then perhaps you expect from me; for I perceive by what is mark'd in that you sent, you design'd me no other Task, than to reflect on those Passages which you think may touch the Reputation of my self, and some of my Friends: You say, many think that divers of the Addressers (especially the first of them) were employ'd and manag'd by Court-Agents, and as they were directed, drew in other well-meaning People, to do as they had done, and were well paid too for their Pains: And now this passes for Current News, since such a Gentleman hath intimated to the World, *That the Mediators of this New Alliance, are such as have been formerly employ'd in Treaties of the same kind, and there detected to Act by Order, and to have been*

empower'd to give Encouragements and Rewards, &c. And how if those very Men that have formerly sprinkled Money among the Dissenting Ministers, should now have the same Authority, Practise the same Methods, and disburse where they cannot otherwise persuade; and the Ministers that are once fallen under this Temptation, are in some sort engag'd to continue their Frailty, by the awe they are in, lest it should be expos'd, &c. And you say, this Suggestion takes the more, because the first Addressers were Anabaptists.

Indeed Sir, if these Passages had not been mark'd with your Pen, I should have esteem'd them more worthy of Contempt than any Reply. Innocence you know is always Bold, and renders Men regardless of the sly Insinuations of Malevolent Tongues: But seeing you are pleas'd to point me to them, because (as you say) I was one of the First, that had my Hand in Addressing, and can best tell what Truth there may be in them: I beseech you (if you can find him) give my Service to our New-Addresser, and tell him he will mightily Oblige me, by a particular account of the Mediators of this New-Alliance, and of the Persons among whom they have sprinkled the Money, allow'd for this good Service: For I'll assure you (if what he says be true) I am cheated of my Part, to this Day.

But to be serious: The whole of these Insinuations, makes up but one *Puill Calumny*. You know I was one that Presented the First Address to His Majesty, and I know full well, all the Persons concern'd in, and the whole manage of that Affair: And I Challenge the Author of this Libel, to make good his Charge against us, or any other, concern'd in like Dutiful Return of Thanks to His Majesty: Let him expose us if he can: Let him produce but some shadow of Likelihood (I will not say Proof) that we were either Solicited or Bribe'd, to do what we did, and it shall excuse him; or else he cannot but Fall under the foul Disgrace of a Slanderer. And as I certainly know his Intimations of us to be False; so I have Reason to Believe his Suggestions of like Practises in former Times, to be Malicious and Untrue.

Does he think the Dissenters have no sense of Royal Bounty, to quicken them to their Duty? Or that they can Receive a new Life from their Prince, and not Thank Him for it, without a Reward? If some Men can hardly be Induc'd to Thank the King for their Possessions, unless they had their former Freedom to Address Him for the Utter Extirpation of Phanaticks, must other Mens Corn, be Measur'd by their Bushel? No! I can assure him our Hearts were too full of Joy, upon the first Notice of the King's Mercy towards us, to admit our waiting for any Invitations unto Gratitude.

But it seems our Friend is concern'd, that we can more readily Comply with Prescrib'd Forms of Addressing, than a Form of Prayer. Verily, as the sense of our former Misery, under the Late Persecutions, taught us to pray without a Liturgie, for Deliverance out of them: So the abounding Grace of His Majesties Indulgence, taught us to give Thanks for it, both to God and Him, *Sine monitore quia ex animo*. And I challenge him again, to give the Instance of one Address, fram'd for the Dissenters, and not upon them by other Hands.

Let him assign the Place where the Tired Post-Horses, arrived with their Circular Letters to solicit Addressees, and Name the Persons that were either Threaten'd, or Frighten'd into a Compliance with them; or else all his Florid Language can never excuse him, from the Guilt of the most ill-natur'd Calumny.

If you think my Expressions too Tart, you must remember, That a Man's good Name is as dear to him as the Apple of his Eye; yet I could not have been mov'd to this Roughness, if these Intimations had not reflected as much upon the King and His Ministers, as upon our selves.

Perhaps the Gentleman's Design in part, may be to frighten all Dissenters from entering into any kind of Employment under His Majesty, lest they should be Branded as Mercenary Tools, by him, for enjoying His Majesties Favour: But as they stand in this respect, on equal ground with their Fellow-Subjects, and may be as capable of Business as their Neighbors; I hope none of them will be so silly as to think, That their being Joynt-Partakers with others, in their Prince's good Opinion, can make them Criminal. I dare say they envy not the Favours, that Royal Bounty hath heap'd upon any: Long may they enjoy them; and never may Dissenters have any share with them, if they suffer themselves to be fool'd out of their Interest, or withdrawn from their Duty, by any Artifice whatsoever.

I have now done, and you must thank your self for forcing me to give you this Trouble: You need not be shie of Importing this where you think it fit, for I have only sent you a Brief View of what shall be further inforc'd, if you shall require it from

S I R,

Your very Humble Servant